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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0001
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 3510
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 9081
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE 4095
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA IMMEDIATE 9156
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 3842
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 2077
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE 1064
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000217

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PRESSES HMGN TO ISSUE EXIT PERMITS TO
TIBETAN REFUGEES

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty, Reasons, 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) In a January 18 meeting with Home Minister Kamal Thapa and a January 19 meeting with Foreign Minister Ramesh Nath Pandey, the Ambassador urged His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN) to issue exit permits to the transiting Tibetan refugees. Thapa replied that he expected to receive a status report by the end of the week and perhaps then could provide an explanation as to why there was no movement in issuing exit permits.

Concern About China, but Urging Better U.S.-Nepal Relationship

¶2. (C) FM Pandey acknowledged the strong Tibetan lobby in the U.S., but explained Nepal had to "find a way to address the issue without annoying the Chinese." He noted he was writing a paper so he could have a ready explanation for the PRC. The Ambassador stressed that HMGN should continue to quietly issue exit permits as it had for years in the past. Referring to an earlier plea for a stronger U.S.-Nepal relationship as a counterweight to Nepal's neighbours, Pandey again emphasized that the main issue for Nepal was "safeguarding Nepal's independence."

Comment

¶3. (C) While professing to hear the Ambassador's warnings about deep U.S. interest in Tibetan refugees, Pandey appears to want to use the Tibetan refugee issue as a lever to obtain closer U.S.-Nepal relations. That said, we believe Pandey accurately reflects the King's concerns about not irritating China. The Ambassador has explained that an improvement in our bilateral relationship depends upon Nepal taking the right steps to restore democracy and address the Maoist insurgency. He has also warned the FM, however, that a deterioration of HMGN's treatment of Tibetan refugees would have a chilling effect on the U.S.-Nepal bilateral relationship.
MORIARTY